



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 19, 2016

Contacts:

Ted Thomas, Information Officer – (916) 653-9712

Maggie Macias, Information Officer – (916) 835-2016 (on-scene mobile on Monday)

Doug Carlson, Information Officer – (916) 653-5114

DWR Commissions Its New Research Vessel; the *Sentinel* Will Be at Forefront of Water Quality

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today commissioned a new research vessel as a state-of-the-art replacement for the *San Carlos*, which since America's bicentennial year has been monitoring water quality in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and upper San Francisco Estuary.

The *Sentinel* is a floating laboratory whose mission is to protect water quality. The flagship of DWR's Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) enables staff to conduct water quality, nutrient and lower trophic (phytoplankton, zooplankton and benthos) monitoring of the Delta. The research vessel plays a critical role helping to meet water quality objectives and the mandated requirements of biological opinions issued by the courts to guide water quality issues in the Delta.

The *Sentinel* was named by DWR Director Mark W. Cowin, who is retiring at month's end after a 36-year career at the Department. Cowin named the vessel to honor the late Laura King Moon, DWR's former Chief Deputy Director who passed away in 2015. "Laura King Moon worked tirelessly as a guardian of California's water supply and its environment," Cowin said. "This new research vessel is dedicated in her memory." Moon was an environmental champion who dedicated her [38-year career](#) to resource and water policy.

The *Sentinel's* commissioning took place aboard the historic *Delta King* on the Sacramento River in the Old Sacramento Historic District. During the ceremony, Cowin drew a comparison between the era of the *Delta King's* commissioning in the 1920's and the current era. "We are experiencing a period of great change – climate change, political change and changes in water management," he said. "I think we can agree that the *Sentinel* is a welcome change."

The *Sentinel* replaces the *San Carlos*, which provided valuable service for the past 40 years gathering information that informed water quality analysis, biological opinions and State Water Project (SWP) decisions. Cowin said it was time for a "new guardian of the Delta waters to greet new challenges." Design and construction of the *Sentinel* was accomplished with funding from the SWP's 29 contractors. The construction project began in February 2015, and the vessel was launched by builder Vigor Industrial of Seattle, WA, in October 2016. Sea trials have been occurring since the launch.

The *Sentinel's* characteristics:

- Length – 60 feet

- Beam – 24 feet
- Draft – 3 feet 6 inches
- Weight – 36 tons
- Engines – twin Cummins QSB 6.7 conventional propulsion – 419 HP
- Speed – 20 knots
- 14-foot work skiff with 30 HP motor
- Overnight accommodations for five people
- Meets U.S. Coast Guard's safety regulations for passenger vessels
- Lab Area – 266 square feet
 - Aft deck work area – 337 square feet
 - Air Conditioned
 - Lab Raw water manifold with remote value operations
 - 30 Local Area Network (LAN) connections
 - 4G wireless
 - Three 3,300-pound-capacity cranes, one with direct connection to the Lab

[Video](#) and [photos](#) of today's commissioning ceremony will be available in the afternoon for download on our FTS site. Photos also available to download at our new [Pixel site](#).

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